

13021
9917
The Constant Pay of the Church-Militant.

As it was Represented in a
SERMON
Preached before the Worshipful the
MASTER, WARDENS,
AND
COMPANY
OF THE
ARMOURERS.

In St. Dionis Back-Church, the 15th. of May 1707.

By John Nicolson *A. M.* Minister of Lingfield in
Surrey, and Chaplain to the Right Honourable
Thomas Lord Howard, Baron of Effingham.

Published at the Request of the said Company.

*London, Printed for Daniel Brown at the Black Swan and
Bible without Temple-Bar. 1707.*

The Constant Part of the Church-Militant.

As it was Reprinted in a

SERMON

Preached before the Worshipful the

MASTER, WARDENS,

1707



COPY

ARMOURERS

In St. Dunstons Back Church, the 10th of May 1707.

By John Nicolson A.M. Minister of Lingfield in
Sussex, and Chaplain to the Right Honourable
Thomas Lord Howard, Baron of Effingham.

Reprinted at the Request of the said Company.

LONDON: Printed for Daniel Brown at the Black Swan and
Bible without Temple-Bar. 1707.

T O M Y
W O R T H Y F R I E N D S,

The Worshipful Company of the *Armorsers*;
more especially to Mr. *Andrew Browne*,
Master, Mr. *James Taylor*, and Mr. *John*
Johnson, Wardens.

Gentlemen,

IN Obedience to your Request, I have made
this Discourse Publick, which I humbly ten-
der to your Review and Patronage; above all,
Commending it to Divine Benediction, You
and Yours to God Almighty's Protection, I Sub-
scribe my self, as your many Favours Oblige me,

Your most Humble Servant,

John Nicolson.

12

T O M Y

W O R T H Y F R I E N D S

The Worshipful Company of the Ammovers,
more especially to Mr. Andrew Browne,
Master, Mr. James Taylor, and Mr. John
Johnson, Wardens.

Gentlemen,

I In Obedience to your Request, I have made
this Discourse Public, and I humbly re-
quer to your Review and I am sure above all,
Commending it to Divine Benediction, for
and yours to God Almighty, I sub-
scribe myself, as your many Favours Oblige me,

Your most Humble Servant,

John Nicolson.

The Constant Pay of the Church-Militant.

Revelations, Chap. 2. Verse, 17.

To him that overcometh will I give to Eat of the Hidden Manna, and will give him a white Stone, and in the Stone a new Name written, which no Man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.

IN this Close of the Letter, indited by the Spirit, and endorsed to the Angel of the Church of *Pergamus*, we may at one View behold the large Donatives of our Captain Generalissimo of our Salvation to his victorious Souldiers: To unlock therefore this rich Treasure, that you may plainly see; Be pleased to observe,

First, Here is an absolute Condition proposed in that Part [*to him that overcometh.*]

Secondly, Here is a gracious Promise upon that Condition granted, in those Words [*will I give.*]

Thirdly, Here are magnificent Benefits in that Promise specify'd, and they are in number three, answerable to the Divine Trinity.

Lastly, Here is the secret Mystery of those Benefits declared in the last Clause [*which no Man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.*]

The

The hidden *Manna*, say some, is a Type of our Election; the white Stone, an Emblem of our Justification; the new Name, an Impress of our Glorification: Or more exactly, as others. The hidden *Manna*, a Cognition of God's Word. The white Stone, a Remission of Sins. The new Name, the Adoption of our Persons: There is Sweetness in the hidden *Manna*, There is Comfort in the white Stone, There is Joy in the new Name.

Once more to take a Review of the Words, and to observe their innate Connexion.

First, no Man knoweth the new Name, but he that receiveth it.

Secondly, no Man receiveth it, but he that hath the white Stone.

Thirdly, no Man hath the white Stone, but he that eateth of the hidden *Manna*.

Fourthly, no Man eateth of the hidden *Manna*, but he to whom it is given.

Lastly, that only is given to none, but to them that overcome.

I will take the Words as they lie, and explain them in order.

To him that overcometh.

A Phrase which includes Labour and Industry, yet none can plead Exemption: *To him*, that is, to every one. It is our indefinite Proposition, and that is equivalent to an universal: It is not said to them of *Pergamos* only, but, *to him*, that is, *every one*, whether *Jew* or *Gentile*, *Bond* or *Free*, *Rich* or *Poor*, *Young* or *Old*
that

that overcome the Devil by their Faith, the World by their Hope, and the Flesh by their Charity: All Baits and Allurements by Prayer and Fasting, all Afflictions and Crosses by Humility and Patience, all Conflicts and Assaults by Constancy and Perseverance: Such shall eat of the hidden *Manna*, the white Stone, the new Name, shall be given to such.

But here, by the way, in the Progress of our Discourse observe.

That the Proposals of God's Grace are very general and universal; it is a great Encouragement, that in the Offers of Mercy none are excluded. Why then should we exclude our selves? Mark the Manner of our Saviour's Language. To him. He doth make no Exception, *God is no Respector of Persons, Act. 10. 34.* the Poor as well as the Rich are alike acceptable; the Blood of Christ is proffered, as well to those who walk in a Leathern Garb, as those who Glisten in their outward Pomp; whosoever Feareth God and doth Righteousness, he shall be Accepted and Rewarded, let him be of what Nation or State soever.

But that which is most Considerable, is this: That all God's People are Military Men: No sooner do Men give up their Names to Christ, but presently *Pharaoh* and his Host, *Satan* and his Confederates pursue them with deadly Fury: Hell and Death are at truce with wicked Men; there is a Covenant and Agreement betwixt them; *Satan* holdeth his Peace; but when a Stronger than he cometh upon him and overcometh him,

him, there is an implacable Enmity and Hostility consequently following them at their Heels.

To the unfolding whereof, I shall observe this Method: namely, demonstrate,

First, *What the Cause is they fight for.*

Secondly, *The Enemies they are to fight with.*

Thirdly, *The Exercise, so as to overcome.*

I begin with the first.

What the Cause is they fight for.

And this is Faith; in which Respect we are commanded to strive together for the Faith of the Gospel. Phil. 1. 27.

And the Righteousness of the Cause will the better appear, if we consider,

First, That God himself is the Fountain and Founder of Faith; it is of a heavenly Generation, of a spiritual Birth, it knows no other Father but God, who is called *the Faithful, and the true Witness, a God who cannot lie.* Rev. 1. 5.

Secondly, In Regard of the Price; which is high, so high as none can fully relate it; no less than the Blood of God, without which not one Promise in holy Writ had ever been made, or ever been made good to our poor Souls.

Thirdly, In Respect of the Benefit we receive by the maintaining of it. It doth all for us that God doth: for by Faith God offers Direction in our Duties, Consolation in our Troubles, Confirmation in our Fears, Sanctification in our Filthiness, Guidance unto Glory: in a Word, it is the mighty Power of God unto Salva-

tion:

tion : It is not then a slight, or a trivial Cause we must Fight for, but it is Weighty, Considerable, no less than *the Faith once delivered to the Saints*, Jude 3.

Secondly, Here are Terrible Enemies to Fight with, and they may be reduced to three *Squadrons*.

First, the Devil and his Legions ; how furiously do they set upon us ? Sometimes with Temptation, sometimes with Persecution, that if possible we might let go our Crown : He is, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8. called an Adversary, who, while by Faith we are marching to Heaven thro' this Vale of Tears, Raiseth his Train-bands against us.

Secondly, The World with their Regiment. This Enemy Courts us to deceive us ; it Smiles and Wounds, it Kills with Embracements ; it hath a Golden Apple in one Hand, and a Dagger in the other. *Maria* gave to the Emperour *Commodus* Poyson in Perfumed Wine. Such an Aromatick doth the World Present us withal, that we may Drink and Die. The World is a Silken Halter, a Golden Fetter ; some have been drowned in the Sweet Waters of Pleasure, and others choaked in Silver Mines.

Thirdly, Our own Hearts with their Herds of Lusts : The Heart is naturally a Conclave of Wickedness ; it is an Armory, a Magazine, where all the Weapons of Infidelity lie ; the Heart holds Intelligence with Satan ; it sides with him, and at every turn it is ready to give up the Keys to him : Therefore it is good Reason that we should stand upon our Guard, and give Battel to this Bosom Traytour, who stands in our Way to the Crown. But, B Lastly,

Lastly, The Exercise is so as to overcome. Every Man must Engage, and so Engage as to obtain Victory: Therefore if you would overcome,

First, *Take unto you the whole Armour of God*, mentioned by the Apostle, *Ephes. 6*. Look to it therefore, and lie Open at no Place: But get on every Piece of this Spiritual Armour, whether those of Defence (as the Girdle of Truth, Breast-Plate of Righteousness, the Shoes of Peace and Patience, the Helmet of Hope) or those of Offence, as the Sword of the Spirit, and the Darts of Prayer. Fetch all these out of the Holy Scriptures, which are like *Solomon's Tower*, where Hang a Thousand Shields, and all the Weapons of strong Men. The Apostle there soundeth the Alarm, crying, *Arm, Arm*. And when you have thus Armed your Selves;

• Then, Secondly, You must Fight Resolutely and Valiantly. Dangers must be despised, Difficulties must be adventured on, Terrours contemned, Fears suppressed, a Christian Generosity and Spiritual Manhood put on: there must be Fortitude in bearing of Stroaks, and in Assaying of Strikers: the former is as the back, and the latter is as the edge of Christian Valour.

Thirdly, You must Fight fervently, with all your Might. Zeal is the Beauty of a Christian's Faith, and Lukewarmness is unsuitable to our Commander in Chief, who Swears in the Conflict: Indifference better becomes our Worldly Contentions between Man and Man, than Spiritual Conflicts between Man and Devils.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, You must Fight Unanimously, with one Consent: How easily will the Enemy Prevail when Faith's Champions are divided among themselves? How shall they Adventure their Lives one for another in War, who will not so much as Love one another in Peace?

Lastly, You must Fight constantly, we must never give over Fighting, so long as one Enemy is left. It is not Contention, but Constancy in the Fight which Crowns; we must be Faithful unto Death, if we would receive Life; Christianity must know no Cessation; as soon as we Cease to Fight we begin to Fly.

Well then, be not discouraged in this your Christian Warfare, for in the Cabinet of this Text there is a Precious Cordial able to revive the Dead. What can any Military Person expect at the end of all his Bloody Combats more than this Text doth Promise? Here is *Hidden Manna, a White Stone, a New Name, which no Man knoweth but he that receiveth it.* Thus much for the Condition; I pass to the Promise, in that Word.

I will give him.

It is not I will Render, but I will Give, excluding Merit; it is not in this Spiritual as in Temporal Wars, wherein the Souldier who carrieth himself Valiantly, and ventureth his Life for his Country, may Challenge his Pay of Desert; it is not (I say) so here, because we bear not our own Armour, nor Fight by our own Strength, nor Conquer by our own Valour; in

which Regard though we may expect, yet not Challenge as our due the Reward here promised ; it is our Father's Pleasure to give us a Kingdom, not his Bargain to sell it.

From hence we may observe this Doctrin :

That God's Dispensations to his Church are carried in the way of a Gift : Who can make God his Debtor, or Advantage his Being, or Perform an Act that may be obliging and meritorious? If you look into Holy Writ, from the beginning to the end of our Salvation, nothing is primarily Active but free Grace. *Election that is of Grace, Rom. 11. 5. Vocation is Free. 2 Tim. 1. 9. Justification a free Gift, Rom. 3. 24. Adoption is Free. Glorification is Free. Rom. 6. 23.* and this will Appear the better;

First, In Respect of our selves, and that several ways.

First, As there are many Stains and Blemishes in our best Works : in respect whereof *St. Paul*, that chosen Vessel of Grace, professeth himself nothing ; and the Wise Man telleth us, *There is not a Just Man on Earth that doth good, and sinneth not* ; that is, who sinneth not in the Good he doth ; our Graces are not without Defects, nor our Duties without their Defaults.

Secondly, Again, suppose we had arrived to such a Pitch of Perfection, as no Imperfection is to be found in our Words and Works, yet there is no pleading of Merit before the Almighty ; inasmuch as,

First, They are not our own but God's. We may say of all our Spiritual Injoyments, as *Jacob* of his Wealth,

God

God had Mercy on me, and therefore I have all these,
Gen. 33. 11. Thus did the Church, Isa. 20. 12. Lord
thou hast wrought all our Works for us. Now certainly,
 that which is not our Work cannot be our Desert.

Secondly, We do no more than we are engaged to do, when we have done the best we can; how then dare we Challenge any thing from God?

Thirdly, In a Word, there is no Proportion between that Goodness which is in us, and that which we Receive from him: What is all the Money we can make, all that we can do or suffer towards the Payment of a Debt of Ten Thousand Talents? Such a Debt is Sin, so in the Parable, 28. 24. Thus there is nothing in our selves whereon to ground any Plea for Merit.

Secondly, Neither in Respect of other Creatures. We Read that the Foolish Virgins hoping to borrow Oyl of the Wise, were denied, and plainly told, that they had not to spare, not enough to Lend and Spend too: By which we are sufficiently informed, that neither the Riches of the World, nor the Blood of Men, nor the Treasures of Saints and Angels, have Worth enough in them to satisfy for one Sin.

Resolve we therefore to Fly to Christ, since there is no Name under Heaven whereby a Man can be saved but his.

Thus I have Finished the Second General, containing the Promise; I fall upon the Third, namely, the Benefits in that Promise specified, and they are Three.

First, To Eat Hidden *Manna*.

Secondly,

Secondly, To Receive a white Stone.

Thirdly, To Enjoy a New Name, of which none know the Goodness, but the Possessors of them. Of these in their Order. I begin with the first.

[*To Eat of the hidden Manna.*]

In which Part there are Three Things to be explained; What this *Manna* is? Why Hidden *Manna*? And how we Eat this Hidden *Manna*?

Q. 1. There is no small Difference amongst Expositors what this Hidden *Manna* is.

Some Understand by it that Incomparable Sweetness Believers find in the Meditation of Heavenly Things.

Indeed the Life of a Christian is various, sometimes conflicting with *Satan*, and sometimes conversing with *Christ*: Sometimes Fighting on Mount *Calvary*, and sometimes Rejoycing on Mount *Tabor*. Indeed it is Excellent to have a Foretast of the Marrow and Fatness of Glory, but what will it be to Feed on it? Nay, to Feed on it to fulness, where we may Eat and not Surfeit; nay, the more you Eat the Stronger your Appetite, and the Sweeter your Relish will be.

Others Understand by this *Manna* that Spiritual Comfort which God Drops into the Soul after a sore Tryal. When he intends to Advance a Soul as High as Heaven, he first lays it as Low as Hell, and ushers in the Sweetest Consolations after the Deepest Humiliations. *Light is Sown for the Righteous, saith David, Psal. 97. 11.* Light is a Believer's Portion, and this Life is the Seed-time, and the longer it lies under Ground, the greater Crop

Crop and Harvest you will have in the End. The Hidden *Manna* of Spiritual Comfort is most Sweet after a bitter and sharp Contest; how Delightful is Meat to a Hunger-starved Person, and the Shoar to the Weather-beaten Mariner, and Peace after a long War, and Comfort to him who hath been Afflicted in Conscience!

Though these Expositions be very Sweet, yet others, with whom I Agree, by this *Manna* do Understand the Knowledge and Experience, the Light and Comfort of God's Word; and compare it thereunto in Three several Respects.

First, *Manna* was of a Celestial Original, hence we Read, *Exod. 16. 4. that God Rained down Manna from Heaven*; even so the Word of God is not by Humane Tradition, but by Divine Inspiration, the Wisdom of the Flesh is too Narrow to contrive so Perfect a Rule.

Secondly, *Manna* is exceeding Sweet to the Taste; even so the Word of God is Sweeter than the Honey and the Honey-comb, *Psal. 119. 103.* and therefore it is that all God's People do so highly Prefer and Love the Word above all outward Dainties.

Thirdly, *Manna* answered all Appetites, it was Food both for Men, Women, and Children: Thus the Word is of the like Nature; it is *Milk for Babes, and Strong Meat for them of greater Growth, 1 Pet. 2. 2. Heb. 5. 14.* They who are newly Converted, that are Meek and Tender Stems in Christianity, there are Precious Promises which serve as Milk for their Nourishment; and for those who are Grown Christians, who

who are Old Disciples, who by Reason of Use, have their Senses Exercised to discern Things that differ, there are profound Depths to Meditate in: So True is that Comparison, That the Word of God is a River, wherein a *Lamb* may Wade, and an *Elephant* Swim.

Fourthly, *Manna* was Eaten by the *Israelites* till they entred into *Canaan*; even so the Word of God is our Spiritual Food till we come to Feast it in Heaven. As Bread is the Supporter of our Natural, so is the Scripture of our Spiritual Life while we are in this Wilderness, it being called the *Staff of Bread*, *Is. 3. 1.* and they who Despise it, reject the Counsel of God against themselves, and refuse Life.

Fifthly, *Manna* was Eaten by it self, so the Word of God must be received without any Sophistication and Mixture in all Godliness and Sincerity.

Lastly, *Manna* was kept in a Golden Pot, laid up in the Ark as a Monument of *Israel's* Preservation in the Wilderness, and for the Instruction of their following Generations: Even so the Word of God is Preserved by a strange and unspeakable Power, that all that belong to the Election of Grace may be brought throughout all Ages to the Knowledge of it, and Obedience to it. In these several Relations God's Word is here resembled to Hidden *Manna*.

Q. 2. But why Hidden?

Ans. I Answer.

First, In respect of God; *Manna* was concealed from Man till God brought it out of Heaven; even so the
Apostle

Apostle telleth us, *Eph. 3. 9. that the Gospel is a Mystery, Hidden in God, in whom are laid up all the Treasures of Life and Immortality.* This great Mystery of our Salvation was hid in the Secret Closet of God's Bosom, till Christ brought it thence and Preach'd it both to *Jews and Gentiles.*

Secondly, In Respect of Carnal Men, the *Jews* only did Eat of *Manna*, that Food of Angels; the *Egyptians*, with the rest of the World, were Ignorant thereof: Even so only those that are conquering Christians are made Partakers of this Hidden *Manna*, which is not seen of the rest of the World, whose Eyes are blinded by the God thereof, so that they are not able to discern the Things therein Contained, although they Abound with Eminent Parts and Gifts, Exquisite Wit and Learning.

Q. 3. But how shall we Eat of this Hidden Manna?

Ans. This Eating Implies a Threefold Action.

First, An Eagerness in craving after it, and Impatiency for the Want of it; when a Man is Hungry or Thirsty, nothing will satisfie him but Meat or Drink: Give him what you will else, whether Honours, Wishes, or Pleasures, he is still restless. Even so, all the Delights and Musick of the World will not Answer and Content the Desires of him, who is engaged in this Bloody Conflict, till he Eat of this Hidden *Manna*: Hence David cries out, *I have longed for thy Salvation, O Lord; like the Panting of a Hunted Hart after the Water-brooks, or like Rachel after Children; he is ready to Die for want of this Hidden Manna, the Comforts of the*
C
Word,

Word, which he Praiseth more than all the Contentments which are to be found in the World.

Secondly, The Eating of this Hidden *Manna* Implies great Joy and Delight in the Fruition: What Gladness doth an Hungry Man take in Eating after Hard Labour and Travel? Even so, when a Poor Believer, who hath been long conflicting with the Enemies of Salvation, shall by repairing to the Word, that Feast of Promises, know that the Righteousness of Christ is sufficient to the Cloathing of his Nakedness; his Merits to the satisfying of his Debts, and that he Sitteth at the Right Hand of the Father Interceding for him; this is as Good News from a far Country, as Cold Water to the Thirsty Soul, as Hidden *Manna* to the troubled Conscience.

Thirdly, It denotes a concocting of what is Eaten: It is not sufficient that Meat be received, unless it be also well digested; or the Hidden *Manna* of the Word Exhibited, unless joyfully received, and effectually applied; thus I have opened the Nature, the Excellency, and the Use of this Hidden *Manna*; I will Close it up with a short Use.

Well then, Endeavour after a Tast of the Gracious Goodness of the Lord; when the Dispensers of the Mysteries of Salvation open unto us the Holy Scriptures, they set before you a Casket of Rich Pearls, they open the Golden Pot of this Hidden *Manna*, but when by Faith you receive and apply them to your selves, then, you become Owners of those Pearls, Eaters of that *Manna*. Oh! Then never give God over, till he hath given thee

thee not only a Sight but also a Taſt; not only a Taſt, but alſo a Reliſh; not only a Reliſh, but a thorough Concoction of the Hidden *Manna* of his Word, which will the better Prepare thee for the Second Benefit here Promiſed in that Part.

And alſo will give him a white Stone.

There is much Controverſy amongſt Divines about this white Stone, but moſt Conceive that it is an Alluſion to the Cuſtom of the *Roman* Judges in their Courts of *Judicature*, who when they Acquitted any Perſon Arraigned, they gave him a white Stone; and when they Condemned any, they gave him a black Stone; and likewise in their Election of Magiſtrates, when they gave their Affirmative Voice to any, they gave him a white Stone, and their Negative a black: To which manner of Proceedings Chriſt by his Spirit doth ſeem to Allude, offering thoſe who are his Victorious Souldiers, that they ſhall not Eat only of the Hidden *Manna*, experimentally receive much Sweetneſs from his Word, but alſo a white Stone, the Forgiveneſs of their Sins.

And it is called a white Stone, not only to Imply the Freeneſs, but the Fulneſs of the Bleſſing, which in Scripture is Expreſſed under ſeveral Terms.

Sometimes this white Stone, or Remiſſion of Sin, is call'd a caſting off Sin behind the Back; when God Caſts in this white Stone, he caſteth away all Regard or Notice of the Sins of Believers, ſo as not to Punish them; *when the Iniquity of Jacob ſhall be ſought for it ſhall not be found.*

Sometimes this white Stone, or Remission of Sins, is called a Drowning of them in the Bottom of the Sea, *Mich. 2. 29.* Implying, that Believers Sins shall never Rise against them to Judgment.

Sometimes this white Stone, or Remission of Sins, is expressed by not Remembring of Sin; this is a Part of the Covenant, that Legacy of Free-Grace, *Jer. 31. 34.* *I will Forgive their Iniquity, and Remember their Sin no more;* God will so Forgive the Sins of his People, as to Forget them; and if he Forget them, they shall never receive the Wages of them.

Sometimes this white Stone is expressed by Washing away of Sin, *Wash me thoroughly from mine Iniquity, and Cleanse me from my Sin, Psal. 51.* when God Pardons the Sins of his People, they are so washed, as if they had never been polluted, they are as it were Unspotted, Innocent.

Sometimes by the term of acquitting, *Job 10. 14. Wilt thou not acquit me from mine Iniquity,* was the Expostulation of Job; acquitting is a Term of Law, whereby a Man hath a Discharge or Dismission from the Court of all Processes whatsoever; thus God in Forgiving the Sins of his People will Tear all those black Bills that are Filed against them in the Court of Heaven.

Sometimes it is expressed by covering of Sin, *Psal. 32. 1. Blessed is the Man whose Sin is forgiven, and whose Iniquity is covered:* The Sins of Believers, which are a Reproach and Deformity to them, are Covered with the Robes of Christ's Righteousness.

Some-

Sometimes it is Expressed by blotting out of Sin,
*Is. 43. 25. I will blot out your Transgressions for mine own
 Name Sake.*

By all which Variety of Expressions, the Quality
 and the Certainty of this white Stone is Discovered.
 But how (may some say) doth God give this white Stone?

To which I Return this double Answer.

First, Sometimes God giveth this white Stone, in
 Respect of Particular Manifestation, delivering to them
 some Private Marks and Tokens of his Love, whereby
 they are Certified of the Pardon of their Sins: But Ob-
 serve, This Manifestation is only Discovered to some
 Eminent Saints, who were Eminent Sinners, such as
Manasses, Mary Magdalene, Paul: And it is True, God
 hath set down some Common and Undeniable Testi-
 monies in Scripture of the Knowledge of our Remission;
 but at some special Seasons to some special Persons, there
 is more secret and piercing Light darted into, whereby
 a Man is fully convinced, that he is received into Fa-
 vour which begetteth such a Joy as the World is not
 Acquainted with.

Secondly, by Publick Declaration in the Ministry of
 the Word, when the Soul Accepts of the Condition,
 and Applies the Promise of Remission of Sin to his
 Soul; as for Instance, the Word Affirms, that he who
 Confesseth and Forsaketh his Sin shall find Mercy:
*David putteth it into Practice, I said I will Confess my
 Sin, and thou Forgavest mine Iniquity*: Thus also the
 Apostle: *There is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ
 Jesus*:

Jesus in this Time, I find him speaking of Men in their Natural Condition, calleth them Children of Wrath, as well as others, but God, who is Rich in Mercy, in such Mercy as Rejoyceth against Judgment, is Pleased to his Vessels of Honour by giving this white Stone, to give them a Certificate of an Absolute Remission. But some may demand further, viz. How shall a Man be assured that he hath received this white Stone?

To this I Answer, There are in Scripture Infalible Marks to discover the Truth thereof.

First, This white Stone, or Forgiveness of Sin, is Accompanied with unfeigned Sorrow and Remorse of Heart for Sin past; Sins Forgiven are steep'd in Blood, and soak'd in Tears; Sorrow before Remission is Legal and Servile, none can Mourn in an Evangelical Manner, but they who are brought into a pardoned Condition. Never did any Read their Pardon with dry Eyes. Look upon that Weeping Penitent, Luke. 7. 38. who stood behind Christ Mourning, the Heart was a Sacred Limbeck, out of which those Tears were Distilled.

Secondly, This white Stone is accompanied with a holy Dread of Heart for the Time to come against the future commission of Sin; that which the Church spake in another Case, Cant. 5. 3. may be well alluded to a pardoned Believer in this. I have washed my Feet, how shall I defile them? What Madnes is it in a Man, when God hath washed him, to wallow in the Mire again? A true Penitent reckons with himself what Pains it cost him to get his Sins pardoned; what Vows and

and Resolutions he hath made; what Bonds and Obligations he hath sealed; what Raps and Knocks at Heaven Gate e're he could get God to answer or speak one Word of Peace; and this makes him fearful of falling into, and careful in avoiding the Bryers again.

Thirdly, Pardon of Sin is accompanied with a holy Endeavour for the Mortification and Extirpation of all Sin; they who have the Guilt of Sin pardoned, labour to have the Power of Sin destroyed; Saints conflict to give Sin it's Deaths Wound.

Fourthly, They who have this white Stone, are arrayed with Sincerity and Innocency: *Blessed is the Man, whose Sins are forgiven, and in whose Mouth there is found no Guile, Psal. 32.* that is, he who is an upright Man, a true-hearted *Nathaneel*, by Faith apprehending the Love of God in pardoning his Sins, cannot but return the like Sincerity, of Affection to him again: *O, saith the Soul, hath the Lord dealt bountifully with me, and shall I deal deceitfully with him? God forbid.*

But some may object, May a Man have a Title to this white Stone, and yet not know it?

I answer, it is possible for a Man to have the Patent of his Remission sealed, and he not know of it; and there is a double Reason for it.

First, To raise up in Men a stronger Desire, and an higher Esteem of this white Stone. Things hardly come by are highly set by; thus God doth detain from his People the Knowledge of the Remission of their Sins, that so they may the more heavenly make much of it, after so long a Desertion.

Secondly,

Secondly, To check and keep Men in Awe in Respect of dayly Infirmities : It may be thou keepest back Obedience from God, and therefore God keepeth back Comfort from thee : This is the Reason why God Pardons his People, and they may not know it, to make them more Careful of their Lives : When a Pardon is Written in Heaven, and not in the Conscience, it is to make you Recollect your selves, and to Examine what you have done : Have I exercised my Graces, or performed my Duties so duly and so truly as I should ? When thou art not much in Grace, thou wilt be little in Peace.

Thus I have explained the Virtue of the white Stone, and answered several Queries thereto belonging. I will briefly apply it.

Great is the Comfort that poor Believers may receive from this Doctrin : A Mercy of all Mercies it is to Enjoy this white Stone, inasmuch as that one Benefit is Effectual to make them truly Happy. To set it a little more Home upon you, Consider ;

First, It is a costly Mercy ; that which inhanceth the Price of it, is the Effect and Fruit of Christ's most Precious Blood ; *without shedding of Blood there is no Remission, Heb. 9. 22. Christ did Bleed out our Pardon,* he was not only a Lamb without Spot, but a Lamb Slain ; every Pardon a Believer hath is Written in the Blood of his Saviour.

Secondly, It is an Enriching Mercy ; the Remission of Sins is the Queen of Mercies : So that wheresoever she

she goes, a Rich Attendance Waits upon her; since if our Sins be Pardoned, we have Grace from, Peace with, Access to, Joy in God; yea all needful Blessings both for this Life, and that which is to come: *Hast thou but one Blessing? My Father! Said Esau: Lo here are Two Eminent ones on each Hand, the Hidden Manna on one, on the other*

[*A new Name.*] In two Cases the Name is changed: In Marriage the Wife loseth her own Name, and in Adoption a Person assumes a new Name: So here, our first Name is a Name of Nature, our second a Name of Grace; our first a Name of Misery, the second a Name of Mercy: He that before was a Sinner, is now a Saint, he that was a Slave is now become a Son. No Wonder, that St. John points the Finger, by way of Admiration, *1 Joh. 3. 1. Behold what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God!* So that this new Name signifies our Dignity in Christ, which Dignity is amplified,

First, By its Perpetuity; *and this New Name is Written in the white Stone.*

Secondly, By its Intricacy; *which no Man knoweth but he that receiveth it.*

I begin with the first, viz. The new Name: Wherein is implied these three Things.

First, A Translation out of one Family into another: He that hath this new Name, is translated from Darkness to Light; from the Power of Satan unto God; he is taken out of the old Family of Hell, and is received

D

into

into a noble Family, the Family of Heaven, the Household of God ; God is his Father, Christ his elder Brother, Angels his Fellow-servants, the Saints Co-heirs.

Secondly, an Immunity or Freedom from the Command and Penalties of the old Kingdom : He that hath this new Name, hath no more to do with Sin : Mistake me not, he hath to do with Sin as an Enemy, to which he gives Battle, but not as a Lord, to which he yields Obedience ; true, whilst he lives here, he is under a Sinful Necessity, but not under the Tyranny of Sin.

Thirdly, A Legal investiture into all the Rights and Privileges of God's Family ; and here I must forbear, because it would require an Eternity to make an Inventory : *Glorious Things are spoken of thee, O thou City of God !* Yet to give you a Taste, I will reduce them to Two Heads, and they are, either such as Concern this Life, or that which is to come.

Those that Concern this Life are Two.

First, A Particular Interest in God's special Providence ; True, God hath a General Providence over all Things, he openeth his Hand, and filleth every Living Thing ; but he hath a more special Providence over his Adopted ones ; there is not a Tear that Drops from their Eyes, but he Bottles it ; nor a Sigh that falls from their Hearts, but he takes Notice of it ; he Numbers their Steps, their Hairs, and is Acquainted with all their Ways ; what can they Want, who have such a Shepherd ? If their Necessities be Outward, he is their Father ;

Father ; if Inward, he is the God of all Grace ; if Doubtful, he will Establish them, and Guide them in the Way in the which they should Walk.

Secondly, A Right and Title to the free Use of the Creatures, both for Necessity and Delight : To him who is a Son of God every Creature in the World is set apart for his Use.

Those that Concern the Life to come are Likewise Two.

First, He that hath this New Name is Free from eternal Wrath, and everlasting Damnation : in the first Adam all the Curses written in the Book of God were due unto them, but by Virtue of the second, the Entail is cut off ; the new Creature is out of the Power of Hell.

Secondly, He that hath this new Name shall enjoy God in Glory, and this is the highest Link in all the Chain of a Believers Happiness.

What is the Desire of an obedient and affectionate Child ? Is it not to have communion with his Father ? an adopted Son cares for nothing but what hath *aliquid Patris*, something of the Father in it ; he loves holy Duties, as they are Manuductions to lead him to his Father ; why is Prayer sweet ? Because thereby he hath Conference with the Father ; Oh how ardent must their Desires be, to be where God is, since it is the Purpose of Christ's Prayer which he made before his Crucifixion, to comfort the Hearts of his troubled Disciples.

From these Considerations be ye exhorted to endeavour for the obtaining of this new Name ; and for that Purpose, I will propose these two Things,

First, Consider the Majesty of the Person, whose Name they bear; no less than the Son of God: Seemeth it, saith David, to you a light Thing to be the Kings Son-in-Law, speaking to Saul's Courtiers; and it is registered as an evident Proof of Moses Faith, that preferred the Reproaches of Christ before the Title of the Son of Pharaohs Daughter: Between God and Soul, what Comparison? Between the Lord of Heaven and Earth, what Proportion? David might be Saul's Son-in-Law, and yet miss of the Crown: Moses might have been Pharaohs Daughters Son, and yet still in a State of a Subject; but now all Gods Sons are Heirs, every one, not to a small Possession, but to a Kingdom which cannot be shaken, but reserved for us for ever in the Heavens.

Secondly, Besides, if the worth of a Thing may be measured by the Purchase, well then may the Adoption of Gods Elect be valued at a high Rate; the Redemption of a Soul is very precious, the Purchase is this; The Son of God must become the Son of Man, that the Sons of Men may become the Sons of God. Never a Person of greater State, he thought it not Robbery to be equal with God: Never Debasement of lower Pitch, in making him as nothing, by whom God made all things: Who would not spend his Time to be assured of that which is of such Worth and Dignity? which is further set forth by the Perpetuity of it in that Part, it is

[Written,]

So

So as it can never be blotted out: The State of Adoption is an unchangeable Estate, they who are once advanced to this Honour, can never be deprived thereof: And this will appear upon several Relations.

First, In Respect of the Trinity, in the Business of our Salvation; the Scripture Speaketh of God distinctly in Three Persons, each of them having a peculiar Work therein. The Father is the Fountain, the Son the Ground, the Holy Ghost the Accomplisher. Now it is Plain there is no Defect in these Three which may Hazard the State of Adoption.

First, Touching God the Father, he is not as a Man, that he should Repent, his Foundation standeth sure, having his Seal, his Thoughts are not as our Thoughts, nor his Ways like our Ways: What is the meaning of that? We Play Fast and Loose with those to whom we are bound in the Obligations of Love and Duty, we Affect and Disaffect with a Conceit; Smile and Frown with a Look; Praise and Dispraise with a Breath; but God having Loved us once, he Loveth us to the End.

Secondly, Touching Christ, he is the Author and Finisher of our Faith, and the Prince of our Salvation; all that the Father hath given him, he hath Lost none, save the Son of Perdition: neither shall any be Able to Pluck them out of his Hand: Those whom God hath Blessed shall be Blessed, and receive that Kingdom Prepared for them before the Beginning or Foundation of the World.

Thirdly, Touching the Holy Ghost, in that he is said to be in the Sons of God, and that not as a Guest to tarry for a Day or Two, but as an Inhabitant to dwell and remain in them: Gods Children are the Temple of the Holy Ghost, and do you think that he will leave his Temple, and forsake his Habitation? And all True Believers are of the Spirit, and can we Imagine there shall be a Separation? It cannot be on Gods Part that our Adoption is Changeable.

Secondly, Our Adoption stands firm inspite of the Malice of our Adversaries, whether Sin or Satan.

First, Sin cannot Dispossess the Sons of God, because all things shall work together for their good; now if all things for their good, then not Sin for their destruction,

Secondly,

Secondly, Satan cannot, altho' he endeavour it; and as he hath been a Murderer from the Beginning, so is his Malice increased, because his Time is shortned, but he cannot effect it upon a double Account.

First, Because his Head is broken, This main Strength is gone, he cannot recover it. If Satan had a Limb only wounded, he might lick himself whole, but if the Head be quell'd, there is no Cure.

Secondly, Because we have a plain Assurance that greater is he that is in us, than against us, tho' he be a roaring Lion, yet Christ is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah: Though Satan with all his Hellish Forces Pursue after the Chosen of God, yet they are preserved by a High Hand.

Thirdly, it cannot be from our selves, if so, it must be by the Loss of our Faith, and this is Impossible.

Because Faith is the Gift of God, and his Gifts are without Repentance; indeed if our Faith were begotten in us of our selves, and had a Dependence upon the Freedom of our Will, then it might be taken from us, but it is Gods Gift, and that like himself is Unchangeable.

Again, Christ hath Prayed that our Faith fail not, *Joh. 17. 15. Father, I pray thee that thou wouldst keep them from the Evil one;* and what greater Evil than the Loss of our Faith? Is it Possible that his Prayer should be in Vain? *Father, I know* (saith Christ) *thou hearest me always;* Now if we receive whatsoever we Ask for Christs sake, shall he not receive for his own? If the Word of Christ be able to sustain the whole Frame of Nature, shall not the Faith of Christ sustain the Hearts of Believers? Doth God Hear the least Groan of his Children, and shall he not Hear the Loud Cries of his Sons Blood? Be confident no Temptation shall overcome, though it may overwhelm Faith.

Wherefore do you lay out your Money for that which is not Bread, and your Labour for that which Profiteth not? Why seek you for things which cannot continue, and let go those which are Eternal?

Do you affect Perpetuities, here is a Comfortable and Unchangeable Estate, which no Man can Deprive you of; a Lease of an Estate for Lives is much, a Term of a Thousand Years is more, but a holding of it for ever is much more; but what is

this

this to Eternity ? Being above all in Worth, and above all in Expiration.

It is the Grand Design of those who are of the upper End of the World, to Preserve their Names to Everlasting Generations, but this is the Reason why they take the Wrong Course, because they are Ignorant of the Excellency and the Perpetuity of this which is so Intricate,

That no Man knoweth, but he that receiveth it.

Knowledge is the Eye of the Soul, by which it discerneth between Evil and Good: No Good can be done, but by her Direction; and no Evil can be avoided, but by her Circumspection; so that of all Virtues Knowledge is the most Commendable, and of all Knowledge, that of a Believers Assurance of Salvation is most Comfortable: Hence it is, that others are Forbidden to Intermeddle with the Righteous Mans Joy, because none know it, but they that receive it. From hence I Observe this Doctrine, that the Souls Spiritual Consolation depends upon the Knowledge of its Adoption.

This New Name is of such excellency and intricacy, that no Man knoweth by outward Discourse, but by inward Sense; not by any External Evidence, but by Intimate Experience: It is not enough that we may be adopted, but we must know it, which is the Marrow of Joy, and the Pith of Comfort.

In which Respect, the Apostle, 1 Cor. 2. 2. desired to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him Crucified: And also Phil. 3. 8. *he accounted all things but Dung in Comparison of the Knowledge of Christ:* And St. John 1 Epist. 2. 20. tells us, *we have an unction with the Father, and we know all things,* that is, pertaining to our Salvation: And there is Reason for it.

First, such Knowledge is most Savoury and Relishing; no Wine so Pleasant, no Meat so Sweet, no Spice so Fragrant, as the Experimental Knowledge of Christ's Blood Shed Abroad in the Heart of a Penitent Believer; and therefore David doth assure us, that the Light of God's Countenance was more Refreshing to him than those whose Wine and Oyl increaseth.

Secondly, Such a Knowledge is Undeprivable; God hath seated, it not in the Hall of the Senses, but in the Closet of the Heart: It is a well rooted grounded Knowledge, Built upon the

Favour

Favour of an Immoveable Rock, that though the Wind of Temptation Blow, and the Waters of Persecution Bear, yet it shall stand as steadfast as Mount *Sion*, which cannot be moved.

Thirdly, It is a Peaceable Knowledge, and that either in Life, or Death.

In Life, when a Man knows God savingly, he knows him in another Relation than the World knows him, not only as *Jehovah* the Lord of Hosts, but as *Emanuel*, the God of Peace; not only as a Powerful Creator, but as a Merciful Redeemer, a God with us, a God for us, and a God like unto us.

In Death, When a Man hath this saving Knowledge, he is able to Sing *O Simeons* Swan-like Song, *Lord, let thy Servant Depart in Peace*; or as *St. Paul*, *I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ*. None Die so Comfortably, as they who are assured of their Salvation.

O then Behold the Happiness of a Victorious Christian, who, in the greatest Confusions of the World, and greatest Conflicts with Satan, is at Rest: The Righteous are Afraid of no Evil Things, because their Heart is fixed, Trusting in the Lord.

Besides, when Death, that King of Fears, shall set upon our Pale Lips, how do their Colour go and come? How are their Hearts Astonished for Want of a Partakership of the Benefits here Promised.

Look then about you; if you will Delight your Palats, desire a Taste of this Hidden *Manna*; if you will be Covetous, Crave after this white Stone; if you will be Ambitious, Aim at this New Name; give all Diligence that the Image of the New Man may Shine in you; Labour to carry your selves Holily in your Devotions, Faithfully in your Vocations, Uprightly in your Conversations, and then undoubtedly the Hidden *Manna* shall be given you, and the white Stone sent unto you, and the New Name Imposed on you, to the Honour of God, to the Joy of the Church, to the Happiness of your selves, which none know, but they that Receive.

Secondly, Such a Knowledge is Unshakable; God hath seated it not in the Hall of the Senses, but in the Closet of the Heart: It is a well rooted grounded Knowledge, Built upon the